DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 343 264 EA 023 823

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TITLE Social Services and Schools: Building Collaboration That Works.
INSTITUTION Oregon School Study Council, Eugene.
REPORT NO ISSN-0095-6694
PUB DATE Nov 91
NOTE 49p.
AVAILABLE FROM Oregon School Study Council, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate Street, Eugene, OR 97403 ($6.00 prepaid; $2.00 postage and handling on billed orders).
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT OSSC Bulletin; v35 n3 Nov 1991

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Cooperation; *Change Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; High Risk Students; *Leadership Responsibility; Public Schools; Resistance to Change; School Community Relationship; School Districts; School Responsibility; *Social Services; *Student Needs; Student Problems
IDENTIFIERS *Partnerships in Education

ABSTRACT

Public schools and social service agencies often serve the same clients and have some of the same goals. To achieve many of the goals that each sector is placing on its own reform agenda, complementary action is a must. For this publication, 13 interviews were conducted with both educators and social workers who have gained experience with the tasks of initiating, leading, and building support for collaboration. Their ideas and advice are intended to serve as a guide for all who are presently involved in collaboration between schools and social services or who want to begin such relationships. Chapter 1 looks at the first question many schools or agencies ask about collaboration: "Whose responsibility is it?" Perhaps the central part of the collaborative process is determining how to go about establishing relationships between schools and agencies, which is the subject of chapter 2. Chapter 3 deals with the fears and problems that can arise in collaboration and how these barriers can be overcome. Chapter 4 addresses leadership, ownership, and responsibility, and examines how these three areas are linked. A list of the persons interviewed is appended. (21 references) (MLF)

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Social Services and Schools
Building Collaboration That Works

Lynn Balster Liontos

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Oregon School Study Council
November 1991 • Volume 35, Number 3

EA 023 823

OSSC BULLETIN

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ISSN 0095-6694
Nonmember price: $6.00
Member price: $4.50
Quantity Discounts:
10-24 copies - 15%
25-49 copies - 20%
50+ copies - 25%

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Preface

This OSSC Bulletin joins a host of other recent publications proclaiming the need for schools and social service agencies to pool their talents and resources on behalf of children who need help to succeed. What makes this publication special is the voice it gives to those who are actively working at the process of collaboration.

The author, Lynn Balster Liontos, interviewed both educators and social workers who have gained experience with the tasks of initiating, leading, and building support for collaboration. Their ideas and advice speak to such practical matters as the fears and problems that can arise in collaboration (and how to overcome them) and how to lead a collaborative effort so that personnel from both the schools and the social agencies experience a sense of ownership and responsibility for the work.

This practical focus makes the Bulletin a valuable guide for all who are presently involved in collaboration between schools and social services or who want to begin such relationships.

Liontos resides in Eugene and is a research analyst and writer who has written several reports and articles on family involvement in education, at-risk youth, and school/social service cooperation.

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Introduction

Public schools and social service agencies often serve the same clients and have some of the same goals. Both also have too few resources to adequately respond by themselves to the myriad problems facing students and families in the community. However, in the past, schools and agencies have tended to work in isolation, or even at cross purposes, instead of looking at how they could work in a way that was mutually beneficial.

The roots of isolation go deep. Michael W. Kirst (1991) points out that the fragmentation between educators and social workers starts during professional preparation, where there is rarely any cross-disciplinary contact. In the field, professional isolation is typically perpetuated by distinct professional networks that rarely interact.

However, the need for collaboration today is so great that schools and social agencies cannot afford to remain fixed in their own separate orbits. "I don't think we can survive in this era if we do not collaborate," says Nancy English, family outreach specialist for Eugene's Whiteaker Community School. "I think it is absolutely the most critical thing if we're going to see success with kids and families." She stresses that collaboration needs to take place not only with children, but with families, too.

Furthermore, to achieve many of the goals that each sector is placing on its own reform agenda, complementary action is a must. Schools and human service systems often have overlapping administrative responsibilities and are mutually dependent. "Family crises and the conditions of poverty must be alleviated if children are able to concentrate in the classroom," explains Janet E. Levy (1989). "Children must succeed if they are one day to support themselves and avoid long-term dependency."

Yet in order to collaborate successfully, schools and agencies must understand their differences. For example, social service agencies have to observe certain laws, eligibility requirements, and other limitations. That means that people who need their services may be put on a waiting list or may be deemed ineligible.

Schools, however, cannot put children on a waiting list. They have to provide access to education for *all* children in the community, including those at-risk of suicide, child abuse, or drug and alcohol problems. It is illegal for public schools to develop eligibility criteria, to set conditions for entrance to school, or to maintain waiting lists. Even when a school is faced with a situation that is beyond its scope and educational purpose, it must respond in some fashion. If a student is at risk for suicide, for instance, the school must take action, but denying the student entrance to school is not an option (Linn-Benton Education Service District and ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management 1991).

Teachers often don't understand how agencies operate and may not be aware of the limitations that agencies must work under. This can lead to frustration. A good example is the confidentiality rule of the Children's Services Division (CSD) regarding child abuse. A teacher may refer a child to CSD, but often he or she is not informed of the disposition of the case.

Or, teachers see children who they feel really need agency intervention, yet CSD or other mental health resources in the community may have quotas, based on the relative severity of the problem, on the number of people they serve. "Those poor teachers see a lot of kids who look severe to them," says Mary Hoyt, assistant to the administrator of CSD for the State of Oregon, "but when you run it against all the other kids coming into a mental health agency or CSD, they're not as severe as the 100 in front of them. So it gets really frustrating."

Collaboration is a way to deal with these frustrations. But before collaboration can begin, teachers and administrators have to educate themselves about the role of social service agencies; and agency administrators and staff have to acquaint themselves with the role of schools.

Deborah L. Cohen (1991a) defines *collaboratives* as "multilateral efforts that unite organizations and people to achieve common goals that could not be accomplished by any single organization." Schools and social service agencies need to understand their commonalities as well as their differences. In fact, it is the goals and beliefs they share about children and families that will sustain collaborative efforts.

This Bulletin is based on interviews with school and social service agency personnel in Oregon who are actively collaborating, not just studying or theorizing about it. Their information and advice are supplemented with findings gleaned from the literature on collaboration.

Chapter 1 looks at the first question many schools or agencies ask about collaboration: "Whose responsibility is it?" Perhaps the central part of the collaborative process is determining how to go about establishing relationships between schools and agencies, which is the subject of chapter 2. Chapter 3 deals with the fears and problems that can arise in collaboration

and how these barriers can be overcome. Chapter 4 addresses leadership, ownership, and responsibility, and examines how these three areas are linked.

My heartfelt thanks goes to each of the individuals interviewed, who gave much of their time amidst busy schedules because they believe so strongly in collaboration. They helped me learn more about collaboration on a practical level—and got me excited about it as well! I hope some of my enthusiasm about the possibilities for collaboration between schools and social service agencies is evident in this Bulletin.

Chapter 1

Collaboration: Whose Responsibility Is It?

Of the children starting school in 1988, one in four was born into poverty, half a million were born to teen parents, and over half, at some point, will live with only one parent in households prone to poverty and stress (Janet E. Levy 1989). Teachers report that each year fewer of the children who start school are mentally or emotionally equipped to learn what they are supposed to learn (*Bottom Line/Personal*, July 15, 1991).

No doubt about it, childhood is changing. But whose responsibility is it to try to fix what is broken in a child's life?

Schools and Agencies Are Often Overwhelmed

Many teachers feel conflicting emotions. On one hand, they feel a responsibility to do something about these problems, but on the other they ask themselves, "Why should we? Why should the schools do it?" Because schools are often underfunded and teachers overworked, underpaid, and underappreciated, educators wonder how they are going to find the time. However, social service agency staff are also overworked and carry heavy caseloads. They deal with families who have severe, multiple problems and are often forced to place people on waiting lists.

Cory Dunn, coordinator of student support services for Linn-Benton Education Service District in Oregon, hypothesizes: "Let's say, for example, that I go to a school and identify what I consider to be 15 percent of the population of children who may have social, clinical, or psychological needs. If I were to refer those kids to the agencies, more likely than not they'd end up on a waiting list." And if schools cannot meet these children's needs? "What happens," says Dunn, "is that we have children in school who are not

Whiteaker School Is a Social Agency

Whiteaker Elementary School in Eugene, Oregon, is located in a neighborhood that has a high proportion of low-income families and homeless children and a growing population of Hispanic students. "I think we had sixty-two homeless children go through school last year, in and out," says Nancy English, family outreach specialist for Whitaker Community School. She estimates that almost 30 out of about 180 total students enrolled at Whiteaker are Hispanic.

Because of the ethnic composition of the student population and the families' needs, English set up an "agency fair" for the beginning of the 1991 school year. About twenty-two agencies were to participate—all kinds of social services, youth, and family agencies. Representatives from various agencies were going to set up booths in the gym and be there, along with donated food and prizes, when parents brought their children to register for school.

"We have such a high turnover that half the kids are new, so those parents will be bringing their kids to school to register," figures English. A lot of other parents come with their children that first day, too, she says. However, English doesn't leave anything to chance. Flyers were sent out in the back-to-school mail and posted all over the neighborhood. Everyone, not just Whiteaker parents, was invited.

Whiteaker School is unique in other ways, too. It is the only elementary school in Eugene with a full-time nurse. The nurse has special credentials: she is bilingual and bicultural (born in Mexico, with an additional degree in social work). "It wasn't easy to get her," English says. "We sacrificed a lot of things, wrote some grants, and got the money. But we feel it's absolutely crucial to have her here." Why? Because of the large Hispanic population. English explains, "Hispanic women traditionally do not go to agencies, but their husbands will let them come to school. So the nurse becomes the social worker." English says the nurse does income tax and immigration and naturalization, and she works with legal aid, in addition to health education. "She is our on-staff person to work with these families," adds English, "as there is really no other place for them to go."

With the county extension office, Whiteaker is offering ongoing nutrition groups—one for English mothers, one for Hispanic mothers. A private organization, Birth to Three, conducts parenting classes at the school throughout the year. Over 432 volunteers gave 4,500 hours to the school last year. "Now I think that's incredible!" English says. And then adds, "We are a social agency."

being served, and the needs that are not being met are the very same needs that get in the way of them benefiting from being in school."

The Place of Schools in Collaboration

Looking at the larger picture—that the child is part of a family, which is part of a community, and that they cannot be separated—gives us perspective. On the one hand, schools cannot simply ignore their part in this picture. While it is sometimes convenient to view the delivery of human services as a problem separate from the restructuring of education, says Atelia Melaville (1991), the two are inextricably linked.

But schools cannot do it all. From an agency viewpoint, Dick Horner, program supervisor for adult and children's mental health at Marion County Mental Health in Oregon, feels strongly that there is no way schools can be all things to all people. Yet many schools, he thinks, are trying to do just this. "I think it's a big mistake," Horner says. "You're much better off bringing those agencies who are already good at doing some of those things into your

school. Let them work with you—maybe redirecting that subtly rather than recreating the abilities that agencies have."

Dunn thinks that if you were to interview people on a street corner, most of them would agree that children should be protected, fed, housed, and educated, but if you asked those same people if they would be willing to pay for these things, fewer would say yes.

The problem is, he goes on to say, that it is not only that they are unwilling to pay for it in the schools, but they also are not willing to pay for it in the community. Ultimately, the problems of children and families are the whole community's responsibility, as we can see when we look at "the big picture."

Family Problems Are a Shared Responsibility

Joanne Miksis, coordinator of the teen parent program at Churchill High School in Eugene, Oregon, echoed the sentiments expressed by many educators and agency managers when she said that she believes meeting children's problems today should be a shared responsibility. The responsibility, she feels, lies with the entire community, but educators have to be open to getting involved with agencies. In her teen parent program, schools and agencies *are* sharing the responsibility.

"I think that's really the name of the game in education today," she asserts. "Educators can't do it alone. We can't educate youth unless we do get involved in social issues." Of her own program she concludes, "I couldn't get these kids through school unless I was involved with social agencies. And I think that's becoming more and more true of a major segment of the school population today."

What Happens If Schools Don't Collaborate?

If schools fail to collaborate with community and social agencies regarding issues such as suicide, child abuse, or substance abuse, they will end up assuming all the responsibility for issues that extend beyond the school's educational mission.

It's a tricky balance, admittedly. Schools play a critical role in preventing and intervening in crisis situations (Linn-Benton ESD and ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management 1991). However, they cannot assume total responsibility for resolving crises. Neither can they abdicate responsibility on the grounds that such problems are outside the school's focus.

"I really feel that the schools of the future will include all the resources in the community, both individuals and agencies and all kinds of social services," says Barb McCorkle, social worker at Eugene School District. "Because we either do it that way, or kids aren't going to get anything."

However, schools must take the lead. Otherwise, there will continue to be children who can't concentrate on learning or stay in school because they have basic unmet needs and problems.

The Possibilities of Collaboration

Collaboration can assume a number of forms and benefit schools, agencies, communities, and, ultimately, children and families in a number of ways.

Collaborative relationships often lead to better understanding of agencies, which improves community relations in general, as well as school-agency connections. Also, collaboration often results in more comprehensive, quality services becoming available to the children and families who need them.

From the family's viewpoint, collaborative ventures often mean their daily lives become less of a struggle. For example, they may not have to spend a whole day going from agency to agency or waiting in endless lines. Students may also be more able to focus on academics. For example, in one collaborative program, teen parents don't have to miss school to get their welfare benefits. With the help of professionals, families can figure out the best way to meet their needs and the needs of their children so that learning can take place.

What's Right for You?

There is no single model or blueprint of collaboration that is right for every situation. The examples in this

Jackson County Outreach Project

Jackson County Outreach Project in southern Oregon began with a group of people who met as a result of Governor Goldschmidt's Student Retention Initiative to see how they could use local resources in better ways. This project was one of the ideas that emerged. The goal is to deliver community services for students and their families more effectively without additional funding.

Currently, a number of social service agencies are located at the health clinic of Ashland High School. The mental health office and the alcohol and drug program each send a worker one day a week; Children's Services Division (CSD) sends a caseworker six hours per week; a private family counseling agency sends a representative weekly; and the Juvenile Department spends time there periodically. A district networking team meets twice monthly to consider particular cases referred by teachers and to share information and talk about concerns. The school coordinates the social services that are provided.

The project is basically unfunded. The Health Department obtained the grant for the health clinic, the school contributes space and phone services through funding for the health clinic, and the agencies donate staff time.

Jerry Horn, regional manager for CSD, says that this kind of project can be done anywhere and with minimal expense. "We didn't go out and say, 'We can't do this unless you give us money'," he says. "It was a matter of saying, 'We're all providing services in this community anyway, and we're all traveling separately, and doing our separate work—why don't we get together on this?'"

The project has been good for community relations and the coordination of agencies. Agency and school staff are getting to know each other and learning about the limitations each works under. Spontaneous counseling has also occurred when a worker has been on site and a need arose. "It's simply a more efficient and respectful way to do business with children and families," concludes Horn.

Bulletin illustrate the range of possibilities. Your community history and the history of your school's relationship with social service agencies, as well as your own unique school features, will determine what kind of collaboration will work best for you. Even a model such as the Youth Service Team (see pages 34 and 35) must be adapted to suit your own situation.

Melaville (1991) states that the social and political climate in communities can range from highly favorable to nonsupportive. The most supportive

Handbook Begins Collaborative Efforts

A local tragedy—the suicide of a young girl—became the impetus for the compiling of Linn-Benton Education Service District's *Crisis Manual for At-Risk Youth.* The manual is a resource directory for administrators, teachers, school behavioral consultants, and agencies. Judi Edwards was the primary author and facilitator in the development of this resource.

In response to the suicide, the superintendents of several school districts in the two counties directed the ESD to put together a handbook suggesting school guidelines for responding to crisis situations in which schools and community agencies had a shared responsibility.

First, the ESD began gathering data on problem areas that administrators would need to know about. Eventually five areas were identified (suicide, child abuse, substance abuse, attendance services, and teen parenting). Then ESD staff met with directors of community agencies that interacted with the schools on a regular basis. The goal was to enlist their involvement in a collaborative effort to develop the handbook. Agencies were asked to contribute agency descriptions, act as consultants to ESD staff who were writing drafts on crisis sections, and keep ESD staff updated on procedural changes and new legislation related to the topics.

For all community agencies that deal with a particular crisis topic, the handbook lists the services they provide, the limitations within which they operate, and the eligibility criteria.

Following the completion of the first four volumes of the handbook, a workshop was given by ESD staff and agency directors for school personnel, agency staff, and community leaders. A process to revise the completed volumes was developed to ensure that the information was current and accurate, and a coordinator was appointed to oversee the entire development of the handbook.

The handbook turned out to have a multitude of benefits. For instance, communication on these topics helped to establish cooperation between schools and agencies—a beginning step in collaboration. "In the process of communicating, without people being expected to collaborate, we were able to establish relationships, clearer understanding, and more accurate perceptions and trust," says Cory Dunn, coordinator of student support services for Linn-Benton ESD. These relationships were helpful in supporting the establishment of Youth Service Teams in the two counties (see page 34).

As a result, school referrals to agencies have become more appropriate, are done earlier, and contain more useful data. School staff now know what to do about particular kinds of situations and how to make referrals. Dunn told of another principal, also faced with the suicide of a student, who went into his office not knowing what to do. But then he remembered he had a copy of the handbook, so he pulled it off the shelf and made copies for his staff. Ultimately, of course, the students benefitted from increased staff knowledge concerning the aftermath of a suicide.

The handbook is unique. Dunn says that he and his staff hadn't seen anything quite like it before. Other schools have begun copying the handbook, and Dunn says they get regular requests for information about it. It was this interest in the handbook that led the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management at the University of Oregon to make the handbook available to a national audience.

Linn-Benton ESD and ERIC/CEM emphasize that for the Handbook to be most effective when used in other communities, it must be supplemented with information about local agencies. Volume 1 of the joint publication, *At-Risk Youth in Crisis: A Handbook for Collaboration Between Schools and Social Services,* contains a detailed section on how to adapt the handbook to your own community.

For information on how to order the handbook, write to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate St., Eugene, OR 97403. Or, call the Clearinghouse's publications sales department at (503) 346-5044.

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climate, she says, is one in which the solution to a problem is a top priority among community members, key decision-makers, and service providers and where previously established relationships exist among potential partners.

However, communities in which a problem isn't clearly recognized or in which potential participants are preoccupied with other concerns need not despair. Instead, this kind of challenging climate can provide valuable planning time and a period in which lines of communication can be established with possible partners.

Sometimes what might be considered obstacles—such as lack of funding and resources—can really be assets as far as collaboration goes. For instance, consider the history of collaboration in eastern Oregon. "I think it's much easier for us to get involved in a collaborative network than it is for counties in the valley because we have a whole history of doing that," says Jim Mosier, executive director of the Central and Eastern Oregon Juvenile Justice Consortium, which has pulled seventeen counties together. "We haven't had the ability to operate independently, so it means we must operate together and be more creative with what we do have," says Mosier. Eastern Oregon's history includes scant economic resources and people who are used to working on a more personal basis.

Melaville considers a community ripe for collaboration when human needs, public sentiment, legislative priorities, and institutional readiness converge. Then it's a matter of building relationships between schools and agencies, if they don't already exist.

Chapter 2

The Process of Building Relationships

Establishing relationships with social service agency administrators and staff is one of the first and foremost parts of the collaborative process. If relationships are not cultivated, nothing happens. However, many school administrators and staff don't know how to begin developing relationships with agency personnel.

This chapter highlights this process, beginning with the premise that educators must reach out to the community. Next, it provides specific advice given by Oregon collaborators as to how to proceed, step-by-step, through the relationship-building process.

Educators and the Community

Don't shut yourself off from the community. Being willing to be part of the community is the first step in building relationships. Here are three suggestions:

1. *Reach out to the community—don't wait for them to come to you.* According to Joanne Miksis, coordinator of the teen parent program at Churchill High School in Eugene, Oregon, schools have traditionally viewed their responsibility as simply educating students, not having to worry about social issues. "I think educators have to reach out to the community," she says. "I think the community is far more willing to be involved than we think."
2. *Get involved in community groups and activities.* Being part of community groups is a way to educate others about schools. Nancy English, family outreach specialist, thinks of teachers and administrators as being insular. "We're part of the school," she says, "but we don't get involved in the community." English

herself is a member of Rotary, the chamber of commerce, and the United Way board of directors. You have to go where the power structure is, she thinks. Then you can say, "This is what is going on in the schools today," and be heard. She agrees that the only way to do this is to go on their turf, "because they're not going to come to yours."

3. *Recognize that school administrators are, in fact, community leaders.* Bob Stalick, superintendent of schools in Albany, Oregon, has a long history of collaborating with agencies and the community. He emphasizes that administrators must be community leaders. "Get in touch with those people who are influential in the community," Stalick advises, "and start talking about what it is that you can do as a school administrator to help the community. You need to work with these other people because they can also help you with the schools. So you're both getting something out of it."

Stalick had only been at his new job for a week, for example, when he met with the chamber of commerce director, the president of the community college, and the city manager to discuss community issues. He wanted to find out what it was about this community that made it good and what could be improved upon. The group gradually expanded and resulted in a community planning process. "In order to show your leadership," says Stalick, "initiate changes within the community that will improve it. Because once you improve the community, you automatically improve the schools."

Find Out about Agencies in Your Community

The National Collaboration for Youth (1990), in highlighting lessons learned from over 350 community forums across the country, said that respondents consistently reported that they knew little about what was going on in their own communities. Many were surprised to discover other groups and organizations that were concerned about or working on the same problems. English says we often don't know about agency services. For instance, she was surprised to find out that Planned Parenthood in Eugene has an excellent program to help parents deal with teens. Anything you can do to familiarize yourself with agencies in your community will help in establishing relationships that can eventually facilitate collaboration.

Getting Your Players: Meet One-on-One

Most educators or agency administrators suggested meeting individually with people first (an alternative is simply to call a meeting of selected individuals). Face-to-face meetings are crucial—no memos! How do you decide with whom to meet?

Some suggested hand picking people, perhaps on the basis of public spiritedness, their ability to "give and take," or their core belief in public education. Others targeted heads of agencies. The rationale behind choosing

Training: Empowering All to Help

Most staff have been educated in a system that promotes competition, not cooperation and the consensus building that collaboration requires. In addition, educators and social service agencies have been isolated from each other and often have misunderstandings about how the other operates.

Training can help educate both teachers and agency staff so that as practical challenges arise, participants can find new ways of working with children and families.

Some ideas on training:

1. *Training as a Way to Begin Collaboration.* Mary Hoyt, assistant to the administrator of the Children's Service Division for the State of Oregon, thinks training should involve a basic understanding of the mission and work of both agencies and schools. For instance, she suggests having agency workers visit schools and observe classrooms to see what it is like for a teacher. Then get teachers to accompany caseworkers when they pick up children and experience a caseworker's day.

Finally, she says, put agency and school staff together in teams and give them simulation work. Go away for a weekend, for example, to do the simulation training, then map out ways for everyone to work together. Let participants come up with agreements and goals for a year. "I think when you do that person-to-person work and build your team and do some bonding, it just pays off," she says.

2. Inservice Workshops. According to David Williams and Nancy Chavkin of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, inservice training to help staff accept new roles and extra responsibilities should focus first on changing attitudes and developing motivation, and only second on building specific skills (Melaville 1991). After staff have an opportunity to air feelings and concerns about the new expectations and changes, they are more likely to benefit from cross-training.

3. *Training for the "New Beginnings" Project.* San Diego teachers are to receive training on how to identify problems, use supportive classroom techniques, and learn about the roles of social service agencies. This training will enable them to refer children with academic, social, or health problems and maintain contact with agency staff located at the school. Agency staff will also be "cross-trained" to learn each other's functions, with the goal of creating "a generic social worker" (Cohen 1991b).

4. *Teacher Training in Tennessee.* Bedford County, Tennessee, discovered an unusual but highly effective training program. Each summer teachers are hired to work in social service agencies through a program called "Service Plus." Teachers learn about community agencies, families' needs, and available resources. Agency personnel benefit from the teachers' experience with children. Perhaps most important, personal relationships that are formed often result in better interagency communication or collaboration once the teachers return to their regular jobs (Levy 1989).

5. *Case Management Training.* Case management teams, in particular, must be knowledgeable about community resources and trained in service delivery techniques, case documentation, and recordkeeping, and the teams must be introduced to concepts of positive youth development and family support. Because case managers have broad discretion in the lives of children and families, interagency collaboratives must also set standards for case management (Melaville).

6. *Ongoing Training.* Ongoing training, counsels Melaville, should expand workers' sensitivity to cultural issues and ensure "meticulous protection of clients' rights." All staff can benefit from periodic revitalization and time for reflection. Those who refuse to divert at least some program resources to staff development risk burnout.

Further ideas on training are offered by the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education: Make training longer than a one-day experience; provide training that is experiential, not theoretical—use on-the-job experiences; train collaborators to identify at-risk youth and show them how to access support resources; offer training in understanding multicultural perspectives; let teachers train each other; and provide staff development for everyone—teachers, administrators, counselors, social service agency directors and staff, and parents.

department heads or directors, CSD's Jerry Horn points out, is that it ensures that a person in authority at each agency commits the agency to the process, and it creates a pool of people who have the power to make decisions.

Other ideas: see who is doing the same things you are; make a list of agencies that you can envision interacting with your school, then have coffee with one person from each agency; choose collaborators for their ability and desire to participate, not necessarily for seniority (caution: don't leave out key players, at least not in active planning stages).

What to Say: How to Communicate Positively

"Most agencies don't even talk to each other," says English. But what should you do or say when you get together for coffee or one-to-one meetings? The following are all suggestions from Oregon collaborators as to how to start communicating.

Learn how your partners operate. Who is in charge, officially and unofficially? What are their needs, pressures, and perceived roles? Remember that connections aren't with agencies, they are with people.

Approach each other positively. You might say, "You have some things that are helpful to us." Or, "We want to do a better job, be a better partner to you."

Take a temperature reading. Say, "What would you think if we did this?" Find out what each other's concerns and needs are.

Acknowledge the person with whom you meet. Allow people to describe their experiences and perceptions. When the other person talks, ask questions to be sure you have understood his or her point of view (instead of telling the person what you think about the problem as soon as he or she is through talking). Cory Dunn stresses that it is important for people to feel heard. If they are heard, then they may be more likely to be interested in what *you* think. "In the process of trying to establish a relationship," says Dunn, "if people do not experience being heard and acknowledged, they're less likely to want to hear a difference in perception."

Ask agency personnel if they have anything they would like to tell the schools. When beginning the process of putting together a handbook for educators and agencies, Linn-Benton ESD asked this question of agencies—and found that indeed there were things agencies wanted to tell educators!

Be willing to hear criticism. Ask, "What would you like to be different in our school?" or "What's your harshest criticism of our school?" Discover what agencies would like to see done differently in any relationships the school and agency might already have.

Find out what would make working together a win-win situation. Relationships must be reciprocal. "If you want someone to do something

different," says Dunn, "you've got to find out what's in it for them. You can't convince someone to do something different just because it's important to you." Dig around a bit to understand the other person's perception of the problem. Ask, "Is this meeting your need?" or "What is it that you need out of this?"

Collaborative Qualities and Attitudes

Certain qualities and attitudes facilitate collaboration, including the following:

- Know what you are asking for in collaboration; be prepared to give in return.
- Be willing to take risks and make mistakes; see problems as challenges.
- Don't be defensive or try to protect your own turf. Each of you will probably have to give up a little turf in exchange for the benefits of collaboration.
- Respect the procedures and conventions of the other participants.
- Trust people. Mutual trust is a necessity if collaboration is to happen. Jim Mosier explains it as a paradigm shift—from thinking in terms of "you and I" to the corporate "we," that "I belong to you and you belong to me."
- Don't get hung up on agreeing all the time; disagreement is natural. You don't have to agree with each other, but you do have to be motivated, dedicated, and committed to each other, the process, and your common vision or mission.
- Be willing to act on your beliefs. Words only go so far in getting anywhere with collaborative work.
- Go into a collaborative venture saying, "I'm going to do my part to make this work." "If you have a mindset that this isn't going to work," says Stalick, "then you might as well not be a participant because you're just going to get in the way."
- Enter the process wanting to change the status quo—that is, wanting to change the way you have worked in the past with children and families.
- Be persistent. Stumbling blocks can be overcome.

Meeting with All the Players

After your individual sessions with various agency people, you are ready to gather everyone together and discuss, as a group, what you have been talking about individually with each person. Or perhaps from your one-on-one meetings, a common agenda has emerged. Here are suggestions for your first meetings:

Get together in a comfortable setting. Where to hold the meeting? Sometimes a logical place presents itself. A social worker said she convened meetings at the school because the school had parking facilities and the agencies didn't. Or perhaps a neutral setting would work best. If you are hoping to locate services at the school, have the school host the meetings.

Talk about what each agency and individual participant has to offer. Why is each agency important to your central vision or goal? What is each person's area of expertise and how can that person help? One collaborator makes a habit of validating each individual at the first meeting.

Ask "Is this an idea we want to pursue?" If so, talk about how you might use local resources in better ways.

Be encouraging. Share examples of successful collaboration and models that you might adapt to your own school and community.

Work on creating common beliefs and goals. This is essential for successful collaboration. The definition of collaboration involves being committed to a common agenda, not a set of individual agendas.

Speak the same language. "Our biggest problem was creating a common language, a kind of Esperanto that we would all agree to use," says a member of a joint venture (Melaville 1991). Drop acronyms or specialized terms and phrases that your school or agency takes for granted. Avoid jargon and clarify terms. Use general words like "children" instead of "client" or "student." This emphasizes what partners have in common rather than what separates them.

Actualize your goals. You can't process forever, says English. After agreeing on a common problem or vision, move on to a plan of action—and then act!

Alternatives: A Big Event or Community Workshop

CSD's Dick Horner says that their board of advisors always kicks off a new Youth Service Team with a big event. The event always includes a keynote speaker, "an 'expert' who shows that it can be done and who explains the pitfalls and what steps need to be taken." He says they get their first commitments at this event.

Or you might want to take a larger view and host a community planning process, which is like a Town Meeting or community forum, and which Stalick has successfully used both in Eugene and Albany.

First, a steering group grew out of Stalick's meetings with influential people in the community. Then that group of fifteen to twenty people invited representatives from all segments of the community to a community planning process.

About 125 people came to the Albany forum in May 1990. An experienced trainer was there to help everyone through the process. People worked in self-selected teams to identify issues that needed to be addressed by the community. In the end, seven issues were targeted, including family poverty and drug and alcohol abuse. Then a plan was outlined for addressing these issues. Strengthening the family turned out to be a major focus.

Through this process, schools and agencies got a chance to know each other better, which may lead to new ways for them to collaborate in the future. If you are interested in such an approach, the National Collaboration for Youth (1990) details the format in its publication *Making the Grade: A Report Card on American Youth.*

Creating Common Beliefs and a Shared Vision

Melaville states that successful collaboratives must be based on a unified view of what participants wish to achieve. Members must participate, she says, in a self-conscious process where they examine what has brought them together, where they hope to go, and what the trade-offs are.

She divides this shared vision into two parts—the broad vision and the practical one. The broad vision, she explains, expresses the need for substantial change and can help an interagency effort defend itself against forces that lead to insignificant projects and marginal change.

The practical vision, on the other hand, outlines the major goals and objectives that the initiative must accomplish if its broad vision is to have meaning. It is essential, says Melaville, to link vision with reality.

This shared process is important. For instance, officials acknowledge the effect of the prominent "New Beginnings" collaborative in San Diego hinges on how successfully the partners are in embracing a common purpose (Cohen 1991b).

How do you create common beliefs and goals? Here is advice from those who have done it:

- You might begin by asking the question, "How can we improve what we're already doing?" Or brainstorm together on mutual concerns and how you can better meet the needs of the youth and families you serve. Identify a common need and common clientele.
- Perhaps several of you have done preliminary goal setting. When you get the whole group together, ask how the participants might elaborate on what you have done.
- Be sure beliefs and goals are open to being challenged and changed, based on participants' needs.
- It will be far easier to agree on common goals and objectives if you work to understand the issues, priorities, and perspectives of each

participant. Consider presenting objectives from your partner's point of view. Then look for areas of agreement and be open to compromise.

- You might want to try living your beliefs before writing them down. Mosier's group in central and eastern Oregon, for example, had their first organizational meeting in 1982, but their values statement was not formally adopted until 1988. "We knew what we believed, but we lived it before we wrote it down," says Mosier. "It was a matter of going back and saying, 'How have we behaved?'" Mosier talked in general about his seventeen-county group's values statement: "Primarily it comes down to the fact that we believe we are in this together, that we're mutually responsible for each other's children, that children are resources that need to be developed, and that we have responsibilities to each other's communities—to the kids of the whole region."
- Like Mosier's collaborative, you might consider hammering out beliefs and goals during a weekend retreat. First, make general statements or goals, then narrow them down.
- Use your own educational strengths in setting goals and objectives for a plan of action. Horner thinks this is a "natural" for schools. ("Most school teachers," he says, "know a lot about how to set objectives. They know how to nail things down nicely.")

Go Slowly: Lay a Firm Foundation

A number of administrators and staff who were interviewed stressed the need to be patient with the process. Most projects took anywhere from a year to five years to get off the ground.

"Beginning initiatives are often impatient to make immediate headway," says Melaville, "but building a strong foundation takes time and considerable patience." So make decisions carefully; if it is worth doing, it will take time.

An example of laying firm groundwork first is Harford County, Maryland's Tomorrow program, which illustrates that the best approach may be to make haste slowly (Melaville). In 1988 the Susquahannah Regional Private Industry Council (PIC) learned of the availability of funds for local partnerships to develop school-based programs for at-risk youth. PIC first brought together representatives from agencies, schools, and the community. Rather than pushing for immediate consensus, PIC urged the group to be candid in expressing their reservations.

As it turned out, the school participants had serious concerns about increased workload and other issues. PIC assured the school representatives that planning would not proceed if the school district had any serious doubts or felt pressured to participate. Thus with communication wide open, the

Teen Parent Program Is National Model

One of the collaborative programs most talked about in the Eugene School District is the Teen Parent Program. Actually, there are two school sites for the district's program, one at an alternative school for teen parents, and the other at Churchill High School.

What makes the program so unique, believes coordinator Joanne Miksis, is that the interagency effort delivers as many services as possible at one site, the school.

Started in 1987, the program involves many agencies. Perhaps the most crucial one is Adult and Family Services (AFS), which many teen parents depend on for survival. "What we've worked out with AFS is probably a model for the nation," says Miksis.

About 60 percent of the teens enrolled this past year, she says, were AFS clients. However, in order to keep appointments with AFS, the teens had to take time away from school. But the goal, says Miksis, is to have these students finish school, which entails regular school attendance. So Miksis and Rich Cook, one of the AFS branch managers who is also on the Teen Parent Program advisory committee, worked out a way to achieve onsite delivery of services.

Cook had all the teen parents assigned to his branch and to one caseworker. This particular caseworker comes to Miksis' class once a week and does intake, answers questions, and leaves child care vouchers. If needed, she comes any time during the day and schedules appointments so she doesn't take students out of class. "That's probably the smoothest operation of any of the agencies—and it's the most critical," says Miksis.

Planned Parenthood does presentations on health care; the Extension Service offers a food and nutrition program; Legal Aid has come to the class to answer questions; a nurse practitioner comes to Miksis' class to do well-baby checkups and education; Catholic Community Services, which operates shelters, has case managers assigned to the teen parents (which means that if there are housing needs, all teen parents are covered); and the Southern Willamette Private Industry Council funds summer school child care so that the program is able to offer year-round child care.

Continuing child care helps to keep the teens in summer school, says Miksis. In addition, it enables teens to hold part-time jobs during the summer. Thus not only do these teen parents receive job counseling, but they also have had two or three summers of work experience by the time they graduate.

The group meets one period each day at school. Otherwise, the teens attend regular classes. In their special class they receive parenting and health education, vocational guidance, and awareness of community services. The class also functions as a support group. "Once a day over a year and you can do a lot," states Miksis.

Miksis also stresses that the program is extremely supportive: "We have day care right there, a lounge area where teen parents can gather during the day, a lot of one-on-one work, and supportive staff. If someone is having a problem with a teacher, I'll intervene or another teen parent will. And we do a lot of things as a group beyond the school day. So there is a different connotation about school—it's kind of home."

The program has been very successful. "We talk about the number who graduate and the number who leave school with a transition plan to something else, which could be a job or further schooling," says Miksis. Out of a group of twenty teens, who finish at different times, twelve graduated this year—a high rate, according to Miksis. Nine of the twelve will go on to community college. "That's good!" says Miksis proudly.

The other measure of success is the reduction in second pregnancies, which are common in teen parent programs. Usually, about one quarter of the teens who get pregnant once, get pregnant a second time during their teen years. However, in four years, Churchill's Teen Parent Program has had only two second pregnancies among eighty students. "From what I hear from other programs, that's an extremely low percentage," states Miksis.

Miksis also sees the program as having a positive effect on student self-esteem. "I've taken groups to testify in Salem before the legislature and local committees, so they get really involved in community issues. It works!"

group was able to resolve key program and staff issues during several additional meetings and formed a formal planning committee "only when common ground was firmly under foot" (Melaville).

Moving Through Developmental Stages

Dunn believes that if you are going to do voluntary collaboration you need to go through a three-tiered approach, with the first level being communication. Relationship building is developmental, he stressed. Getting to know each other and establishing trust is the initial stage—and an important one; don't skip over it.

The next stage in Dunn's model is cooperation: start doing activities or programs together. The final goal is collaboration. Some experts add coordination after cooperation.

Cooperation versus Collaboration

Cooperation is quite different from collaboration. According to Melaville, collaboration involves the need and intent "to change fundamentally the way services are designed and delivered throughout the system."

Cooperative systems, on the other hand, simply coordinate existing services. However, they are a good starting point for change. Participants may agree to share space, information, or referrals in a cooperative venture, but no effort is made to establish common goals. The services of each agency continue to be staffed, funded, and evaluated autonomously, with no alteration or input from cooperating partners.

Collaboration, by definition, focuses on common goals rather than individual agendas. One simple difference between cooperation and collaboration, according to Michael Kirst (1991), is that in cooperative initiatives agencies maintain administrative and program autonomy, whereas in collaboration agencies join together to make improvements that are no single agency's responsibility.

To address problems that are beyond the scope of any single agency but that concern all the agencies involved, collaborative partners agree to pool resources; jointly plan, implement, and evaluate new services and procedures; and delegate individual responsibility for the outcomes of their joint efforts (Melaville).

Collaboration offers not only greater access to existing services, but the opportunity to fundamentally alter the quality of those services. Melaville concludes:

> With the power to recombine existing resources, collaborative partnerships can design and deliver services that are developmental rather than remedial in philosophy, preventive rather than merely corrective

> in approach, and centered on the total needs of the child and family. It is collaboration, far more than cooperation, that offers the possibility of real movement toward the creation of an integrated service delivery system.

Therefore, go slowly; move through the necessary stages as dictated by your partnership's needs; don't bite off more than you can chew; and remember that growth is gradual.

Chapter 3

Dealing with Resistance, Fear of Change, and Other Problems

A ten-month feasibility study by the New Beginnings collaborative in San Diego found barriers between schools and agencies that inhibited them from coordinating their services and approaching families holistically. Some of the problems the New Beginnings study lists are overspecialized services, distant offices, restrictions on data sharing, overlapping or incongruent rules, insufficient equipment, and time constraints (Cohen 1991c).

Don't let this list scare or intimidate you. It does not mean you should become discouraged about collaborating with social service agencies. There are always problems, but they can be overcome. This chapter identifies specific fears, concerns, and problems that staff and administrators may encounter in collaborative ventures. Numerous ways to deal with various issues are then described.

Staff Fears and Concerns

Fears or concerns that were identified by Oregon school and agency staff were often similar.

A major fear is *concern about additional workload and overload.* Susan Kaough, Children's Services Division (CSD) branch manager, says that the problems their group ran into in establishing Jackson County Outreach Project generally had to do with concerns that workers would be expected to do more if they were located at schools than they would if they remained at their own CSD site. Caseworkers wondered if they would be

asked to take on an additional work assignment. Kaough says that this fear was probably a real barrier to getting the project going.

There was also a concern that school co-location would mean that caseworkers would be getting a lot more "marginal" referrals that they would not be able to serve—essentially, *fear of not having control over cases*. Staff thought that co-location would distance their relationships with schools rather than provide mutual support.

Another major fear that was articulated was *the concern that agencies would lose their identity* in a collaborative venture. CSD's Mary Hoyt says that when she and others set up a program in Portland where CSD workers would work at the schools, the main concern from staff was that "if the caseworker is in school all the time, then they're going to become just like school workers." Although this statement is somewhat vague, the sentiment behind it seems to reflect a fear of losing one's professional identity.

Finally, the overarching concern was a basic *fear of change*. Jerry Horn admits that there was resistance among CSD staff to the idea of beginning an outreach program at the school. In fact, he says that every agency administrator talked about the resistance their staff had to the idea. Why? "Human beings don't necessarily like change," says Horn. Hoyt also talked about the trepidation among her staff to the plan to put CSD caseworkers in schools. She agrees with Horn: "I just think people have a fear of change. Some of it is rational, some of it is not, but it's there."

Problems Collaboratives Can Face

How to handle information sharing is something every collaborative effort will have to work out. However, it is an issue that all the Oregon interviewees overcame. Horn says that the key players in his group discussed this problem and decided to "share anything," but to restrict sharing to the people who needed the information. "You have to have agreement up front that you will share information about cases," he believes, "because one of the things that agencies are excellent about is *not* information sharing on cases." For more details on the potential problem of sharing information, see the sidebar on page 27.

Probably every project has run into *personality or ego clashes* of some kind; most projects have also had to deal with *turf, power, and control issues*. However, according to Bob Stalick, the Eugene coalition got along so well that they did not encounter disputes over turf. "The group didn't spend a lot of time on turf issues," he says. "We kind of had an agreement that this wasn't an issue." He speculates that this may have been due to the fact that each person in the group was "pretty secure" in his or her own job.

The group did have one personality clash, said Stalick. One person was being particularly obstructive, so Stalick confronted him about the problem this created. Although Stalick had no authority over him and did not suggest nonparticipation, the individual never came back to their meetings. Once the person who was creating difficulties stopped attending the group, it was able to function more effectively. Other groups have dealt with this type of obstacle in different ways.

Logistics can be either a minor or a major problem. Horn says that the commuting his staff has to do to get to the school, which is in another city, is a minor inconvenience. Barb McCorkle, social worker, finds the logistics of communicating with various agencies all over town a chronic problem. "It seems to me that they all ought to be under one roof, that you ought to be able to get from one to the other quickly, and that maybe they could have a common intake form," she says. School support staff may spend considerable time running around from agency to agency—or taking families who have no car to several agencies. "There are certainly things that we can do as agencies to make ourselves more user-friendly," she states. "We just haven't worked very hard at doing that."

Another difficulty centers around *lack of time and energy*, which can be a problem for staff in collaborating. McCorkle emphasized how much time and creative energy it takes to collaborate with agencies. She wonders sometimes if the time and work she puts into scheduling meetings and organizing collaborative staffing efforts are worth it. However, she knows that "you don't just design a system that works overnight." Hoyt also mentioned that although CSD workers may sincerely want to work with other agencies and schools, they are so overwhelmed with heavy caseloads and difficult clients that it is hard to find the time.

Then there are people's attitudes toward work. Jim Mosier says, "It's easier to fail than it is to succeed. That's one of the things I've discovered about coalition building—that some people are more involved in failure than in success." Why? He explains that it is much easier to stand by, wring your hands, and say, "Isn't it awful!" Then you don't have to do anything about the issues or goals. He cited an example of getting money for detention resources—half a million dollars in new projects. However, when Mosier said to his team, "Here they are—what are you going to do with these?," he says the team was upset with him because it meant a lot of work.

Different professional training and specialized vocabulary may also create problems. Yet, although fears and problems will arise, the consensus is that they *can* be overcome, often just by understanding the collaborative process.

Ways to Solve Fears, Concerns, and Problems

Here are ways to solve problem issues, based on what Oregon collaborators or other experts have done:

Get top-level commitment. Commitment from key officials for the collaborative venture provides inspiration, incentive, and the assurance of organizational backing. One school principal had fears about families coming to the school after a co-location collaborative project with social service agencies was announced. However, the backing of the superintendent for the program alleviated the principal's concerns.

Talk to staff about fears and concerns. Let them air their deepest fears. Then talk about the realities and stress the positives wherever possible. The Jackson County CSD workers' fears about overload and "marginal" cases did not materialize. However, Kaough says CSD administrators repeatedly reassured the staff that they were simply going to be providing the same services at a location that would be more convenient for their clients. Kaough also focused on the fact that the new program would give CSD an opportunity to be in a different setting.

Help staff feel ownership in the project. Involve staff in the planning process from the earliest possible moment. Giving them opportunity for input and decision-making lowers resistance to change and contributes to staff commitment to the project. When people find their experience of a problem included in its definition, states Cory Dunn, they will be more likely to buy into whatever solution emerges. Conversely, if the definition of a problem does not embody people's experience, they will be less apt to embrace any solution that is put forth.

See the sidebar on the next page for more information on this important aspect of the collaborative process. Also see chapter 4 for further details on ownership.

Meet problems head on. "Interagency initiatives that circumvent issues about how, where, why, and by whom services should be allocated, in an effort to avoid turf issues and other conflicts, are likely to result in innocuous objectives that do little to improve the status quo," states Melaville (1991). Hoyt suggests saying something like, "We're not resolving things—maybe we need someone to come in and help us think this through a bit."

Agree to disagree. Team members need to establish a communication process that gives them permission to disagree and uses conflict resolution as a way of moving forward. "We have lots of people in our organization who don't agree," says Mosier. "There is room for not agreeing. On the other hand, there's no room for us kicking anybody out of the organization—no room for exclusion." Each collaborative needs to decide what norms should

apply if, for instance, someone wants to do things his or her own way or fails to uphold the group's common beliefs.

Try to resolve problems first at the lowest possible level. If there are two people who disagree, for instance, Horn advises letting them attempt to work things out before taking the problem to the whole group.

Bring in a neutral party. Neutral parties, especially those who are skilled facilitators, can help smooth over rough spots and often move problem-solving at a faster pace than might happen otherwise, says Levy (1989).

Use policy boards as vehicles to work through problems. One of the reasons collaboratives have boards of advisors, advisory committees, or other such groups is the opportunity they provide to air concerns and resolve issues among participants. Kaough says they used their district staff networking meetings to work through problems and fears connected with their new

Involve Teachers and Line Staff

Involving all the key stakeholders early in the collaborative process is important, says Janet E. Levy (1989), in order to distribute work fairly and foster shared control and decision-making, trust, and mutual understanding. Here are further ideas:

- Include staff representatives in planning from the earliest moment and keep all staff members informed.
- Listen to your staff's concerns. They are doing the nitty gritty work and often understand the realities of the situation. Let them know you hear their concerns. Inservice workshops can also be a vehicle for staff to process feelings about the proposed changes and identify the advantages as well as possible drawbacks.
- Give staff the time and organizational support they need to work across agency lines or do extra collaborative work. For example, Harford County's Maryland Tomorrow program established a half-day teaching/half-day home visiting format and provided mileage reimbursement so that teachers would have time to establish working relationships with students' families. Potential participants were also guaranteed that they would not lose tenure and that their former positions would be reserved for them. Before the program began, the rationale behind the half-day format was fully explained to other teachers to dispel any resentment over the difference in teaching loads (Melaville 1991).
- Help staff view extra roles and responsibilities as an investment and teach them to prioritize their time. "We need to constantly prioritize the most important things we need to do," says Barb McCorkle. "What I try to do about this agency collaboration work is in my mind think of it as my investment—that we are investing time now so we can draw on this in the future."
- Keep teaching staff informed of any changes in agency rules or requirements. (Be sure to periodically update any resource manuals you might have.)
- Invite teachers to the staffing process, as some Youth Service Teams do. "Have them come in and get involved when they have something to contribute or when they need to hear something," says Dick Horner, supervisor for Adult and Children's Mental Health in Marion County, Oregon. If you are updating a case, teachers can add to the process by reporting what they are seeing in the classroom with a particular student.
- Empower line staff and teachers. Jerry Horn says that this is what CSD has done in Jackson County, where staff make many of the decisions. "You need administrators who are willing to give collaboration a shot and willing to let their staffs do it," says Horn.
- Remember that when staff feel overworked, ill-equipped to meet their responsibilities, or undervalued, their disenchantment can have a negative effect on everyone else, including their clients, says Melaville.

school-based project. In other situations, boards of advisors dealt with personality and ego clashes or turf and power concerns.

Be patient—give collaboration a chance. Many fears and concerns never come about. For example, the Jackson County CSD workers' concerns about "marginal" referrals from the school never materialized, says Kaough. Instead, once CSD was located at the school, school staff became "more understanding about what we can and cannot provide and were more realistic in other expectations."

Don't look at resistance as a negative. Dunn says that resistance occurs because people are trying to understand how collaboration is going to affect how they perceive their problems. It takes time, he explains, for people to feel comfortable, speak up about what they are experiencing, and get disagreements and perceptions worked out. There is no way you can force this process, he says.

Dunn adds: Over time and with some committed energy, people establish a common expectation and are more able to be supportive of each other. But that process has to be one that's a thoughtful, patient, understanding, and respectful one, where you see resistance not as a negative, but as something that has to be worked through and part of the natural order of people getting comfortable.

Look at ways you have to gain, rather than lose, in terms of power and control. Make every effort to respect the power and control issues that can arise. Try perceiving collaborators in a school co-location project as adjunct faculty members. A key objective to any joint effort, says Melaville, is to develop a process in which all partners recognize the potential advantages and work together to make necessary accommodations.

Find ways to modify agency or school rules and regulations; be creative about limitations. This can be done in relation to information sharing. For example, Adult and Family Services (AFS) in Eugene worked out the issue of confidentiality with the Teen Parent Program in Eugene by giving clients a release form to sign. Most of their clients sign it, says Rich Cook, branch manager, because AFS is trying to help teen parents obtain benefits. See the sidebar on the next page for more information on sharing information.

Send report cards to each other. Hoyt tells of a regional manager for CSD who sent "report cards" to the school districts that said, "Grade us—how are we doing?" School districts could do the same with agencies. It opens up dialogue and is a good way to spot potential problems. The National Collaboration for Youth (1990) details how report cards have been used by community groups to grade how well communities are doing in solving specific problems.

Create a social service agency coordinator or liaison position. Such a

Sharing Information and Modifying Rules

Partners committed to shared goals can often overcome the barriers that policy differences create, maintains Melaville (1991). Part of the process, she says, needs to be identifying what policy differences exist and whether they result from differences in terminology and inhouse rules that can be changed or from statutory mandates. The latter are binding requirements that cannot be violated, such as those defining who is eligible for services.

Some rules may be changed without having to change laws. When this is not possible, states Melaville, and the law serves no useful purpose, legal change needs to be advocated. In other cases, policy differences may be appropriate and should be left as is.

Confidentiality requirements—those rules that protect a client's privacy—are a common source of technical difficulties. Partners in a collaborative often need to share information, and this need has to be reconciled with the privacy rights of families and children. First, what constitutes privileged information needs to be explored so that team members understand what information can and cannot be shared and with whom and how.

The Fulton County, Kentucky, KIDS initiative advises interagency groups to avoid grappling with the confidentiality issue until partners have established an effective communication and problem-solving process. Focus on common ground first—identify needs and resources and develop coordination strategies to share resources, facilities, and staff. When discussing information sharing, confidentiality concerns will arise.

When the issue arose in Fulton County, participants systematically reviewed each agency's regulations concerning confidentiality. They took the time to air disagreements, as well as to discover areas of commonality. The group then sought legal advice. With state guidance, the team developed a formal release limiting the terms and conditions under which the collaborating agencies could exchange specific kinds of information. This form was signed by the client; each case management team member also signed a confidentiality statement. This arrangement only allowed team members to share information verbally. When it was necessary to review a child's previous written records, participants agreed to follow each agency's preexisting rules governing disclosure (Melaville).

School policies may also have to be modified. For instance, school rules that automatically fail students who are absent a certain number of days must be adapted to bring them in line with partnership goals focused on finding ways to keep youth in school.

The state can provide assistance in removing barriers to coordinated delivery of services, states *Turning Points*, a publication of the Council of Chief State School Officers (1991). For example, schools in which service centers are located have become certified Medicaid providers so that they can be reimbursed for providing onsite health care service to eligible students.

In the absence of federal restrictions, eligibility requirements for different programs can be made uniform through state legislative or administrative actions. State agencies can also reduce or rewrite regulations inhibiting school-based service delivery as long as the health, safety, and civil rights of adolescents are not impaired (*Turning Points*).

In general, collaborative programs try to be creative about limitations and regulations. "There has been a strong commitment throughout to bend the rules—to find ways to make it work," says Jean Jehl, coleader of the San Diego New Beginnings project (Cohen 1991b).

position would solve McCorkle's time and energy overload. Just having someone to schedule and organize meetings with agencies would be a great help, she says. Judi Edwards has been given the job of social services consultant for Linn-Benton ESD. Creating such a position shows the value that the ESD places on school-agency relationships—and frees up time for staff to concentrate on their regular jobs. Edwards says that next year 75 percent of her time will be spent working with Youth Service Teams and educating agencies.

Maintain a positive attitude. You always have problems, says Horn, but what is most important is attitude. "If you have the attitude that there are going to be barriers, then guess what? You'll find barriers—it's about that simple," says Horn. "One of the things that concerns me about community work I've seen," he adds, "is that time is spent focusing on the barriers instead of on the possibilities."

Collaborators must not only know how to respond to problems that inevitably arise, but also keep their eyes on the goal and believe in the work they are doing together.

Chapter 4

Leadership, Ownership, and Responsibility

Does somebody have to be in charge of collaborative efforts? Yes, say almost all the Oregon collaborators, although they also talk about the special qualities it takes to be a leader of a collaborative.

Melaville (1991) agrees:

> Whether joint ventures sink or swim depends on the urgency of the problems and the willingness of somebody to take the leadership. Considering the view that simply developing relationships in a joint effort "is about as easy as dancing with an octopus," exercising leadership is likely to be an especially tricky proposition.

This chapter explores that "tricky proposition," especially examining the issues of ownership and responsibility. The chapter concludes by looking at coordinating bodies, such as boards of advisors or other coordinating/ leadership groups.

Qualities Needed by Effective Leaders of Joint Ventures

The quality of leadership greatly influences the process of agreeing on common goals and negotiating a practical vision, says Melaville.

Some characteristics of effective collaborative leaders are listed below:

- Have a vision but allow that vision to be shared by everyone else.
- Act as visionary leaders—that is, remove barriers to realizing what is possible.
- Maintain awareness of the interests of their own agency or institution while guiding participants toward mutual goals.
- Leave their ego out of their work, don't mind a low profile, and find rewards in simply seeing goals accomplished.

- Foster the leadership abilities of others, never lose sight of the big picture, and get everyone involved.
- Share leadership by delegating responsibility.
- Have perspective, sensitivity, and an understanding of how other systems work.
- Can motivate people without being offensive, use a wide variety of management styles, and offer incentives to the group.
- Back off and trust the process if others don't want to do it their way.
- Trust and respect their partners.
- Encourage each partner to understand the way the others perceive issues and problems, and learn to think of issues from the perspectives of other collaborators.
- Have the ability to keep participants focused on goals to prevent individual interests from derailing the joint venture.
- Represent the collaborative's goals and interests to the community and cultivate potential allies.

Leadership and Ownership

What does leadership have to do with ownership? As the list above indicates, a great deal. Commitment to change must extend throughout the organizational structure of each participating agency. Leaders have a big part to play in cultivating a sense of ownership. Those partners who feel they have no important role to play quickly lose interest. However, if everyone feels he or she exerts some influence, the resulting commitment increases the collaborative's strength and effectiveness.

The Single Leader with a Vision

Leadership and ownership issues are especially interwoven for the individuals who spearhead joint ventures, those who have the vision in the first place. Often this individual will continue in a leadership role after the group has formed and have a strong commitment to the initiative's success.

However, fulfilling a leadership role can be difficult and challenging. The person must balance the views and interests of the institution while working to guide the group. Leaders who attempt to do so, says Melaville, must be especially sensitive to potential conflicts of interest. Frequently, she adds, those who are able to avoid such conflicts have broad, general backgrounds or cross-disciplinary training that helps them see various points of view and ensure that multiple interests are served. Jim Mosier is a good example of such a person. He brought seventeen counties together, yet

attempts to stay out of the limelight.

"One of the things I worry about," says Mosier, "is that the board not be thinking that this is Jim Mosier's project. Last year's retreat was dealing with that issue and I'm forcing them to deal with what if I'm not here, what if I decide to do something else."

However, Mosier says there is already enough leadership among the court directors so that they are not dependent on him. That is because he has delegated responsibilities. "I've been intentional about doing that because the Juvenile Department directors themselves have to have ownership of this if it's going to work in the long term," he states,

> In fact, I'm not in charge of this consortium. A group from the participants themselves put it together. I provided the leadership—I brought people together—but when it came to doing the work, I always made sure that I got buy-offs from the board, that the members had to make key decisions about when to participate and what to do about projects. I won't deny that I provided some incentives and I pushed people and set the process rolling, but I never took ownership.

Mary Hoyt cites an example of how ownership can work in collaborative leadership positions. When Hoyt's idea to put CSD caseworkers in Portland schools came about, she let the principals interview and select which workers they wanted. Partly, she says, this was because principals already had school support teams and would know which CSD worker would mesh best with other team members. She admits it was "kind of a transfer of responsibility or authority" to have the principals making the choices. However, she adds, "I think when a principal makes a selection he or she owns that person a little more."

In this case, it was a particularly wise decision because it turned out that a certain worker was not a good

Leaders' Roundtables: A Way To Sustain Collaboration

The Leaders' Roundtable in Portland, Oregon, has been in operation about five years. It began with big business and educational leaders, but now is expanding to include people such as the director of the Department of Human Resources and other social service agencies.

Bob Stalick, superintendent of schools in Albany, Oregon, who wants to start a similar community roundtable in Albany, describes this group as "community leaders who carry on the mission year after year." They provide strategies—not solutions—for nonpolitical issues facing the community, and focus on problems and concerns that go beyond what elected officials or school boards do. A roundtable's emphasis is practical rather than political. The leadership roundtable notion, says Stalick, is one "where you have people who are influential in the community who can look beyond the day-to-day and month-to-month operations and plan what it's going to look like five years from now."

According to Mary Hoyt, who joined the roundtable's planning team several years ago, the roundtable currently has about six groups that are looking into various issues. "My guess," says Hoyt, "is that we'll wind up doing some demonstration of bringing agencies together."

CSD Workers in the School

As a result of Oregon's Student Retention Initiative enacted in 1988, Children's Services Division (CSD) and other agencies in Portland began to work together to keep young people in school.

Mary Hoyt, who was at that time regional manager for CSD in Portland, thought, "Wouldn't it make sense to have caseworkers in the schools since we share a lot of the same kids?" With that idea, a group was formed from the schools and CSD to plan how they could implement this joint venture in middle schools.

"It was a long process," says Hoyt. "It took a long time, for instance, to get information shared in terms of the kids in the schools and the kids who were active on CSD caseloads." But within a year, the plan had been worked out.

The group decided to consolidate all the cases and assign them to one worker per school and then have that worker stationed in the school and actually working with the established school support teams. CSD workers, then, were housed in the same offices with the school teams, worked at the school from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and reported to the principal if they were sick. Expenses were shared—CSD paid for the telephones and the school paid for file cabinets and desks.

Hoyt decided to let the principals interview and select the CSD caseworkers who had volunteered to be reassigned to schools. It was a wise move, in terms of principals gaining ownership.

The model worked well. In fact, Governor Goldschmidt was so impressed with initial feedback on the project that he invited CSD caseworkers and school personnel to meet with him. His first question was, "What difference does this new arrangement make?" One CSD worker immediately replied, "I get to see the kids every day." Hoyt says that was one of the major benefits—CSD workers saw the children every day versus once every month or so. That enabled them to start building relationships. "Parents who were reluctant to go to a CSD office would go to the school," says Hoyt. "Or the workers would start sending notes home and the parents would send notes back and then the parents would come to the school." It also created a more positive image for CSD.

The governor considered the results so positive that he wanted to assign CSD caseworkers to schools all over the state. Unfortunately, this never happened, due to the passage of a statewide property tax limitation initiative that resulted in major budgetary cuts in state agencies.

The new regional CSD manager has chosen to reduce the model—supposedly to cut expenses—to two caseworkers who work only half-time in the schools doing intake, but do not carry cases.

Hoyt feels, however, that the day will come when the idea will be implemented on a larger scale: "Everything I pick up [says] that to keep kids in school and help make them successful... there has to be more work around the support areas—the human resource side."

match for a particular school. Since the principal's decision to hire this worker had been the principal's, he came back, says Hoyt, and said, "Okay, I'm ready to take someone else."

Other Kinds of Leadership

The Neutral Leader. In many cases, says Melaville, an established member of the corporate or philanthropic community may be a preferable leadership choice. Neutral leaders are independent of the "complexities and demands of participating agencies." Thus they can help ensure that the ultimate purpose of a collaborative—better services and outcomes for individuals—gets met, rather than the advancement of any single agency's agenda. Also, these people may have connections in the human service and education communities that can expand the resources available to the collaborative. Like other leaders, neutral leaders must be continually aware of

the need for all participants to feel part of and responsible for the joint venture.

Shared Leadership. Melaville advocates shared leadership, even for groups that were started by a single individual. She feels that it is best when the vision-oriented person teams up with a more pragmatic coleader. Cohen (199la) agrees. In her report on a study of seventy-two collaboratives, she cites the benefits of shared leadership and the dangers of "burnout" among individual leaders. However, the report also advises that "it may be prudent to discern mechanisms to keep powerful initiators involved, if only tangentially."

Getting the Job Done

Any collaborative effort requires hard work and commitment. It is important to have a clear vision when undergoing these efforts. Especially in the difficult and stressful times, it is helpful to be able to pull the vision up to remind yourself why you got involved in this effort in the beginning.

It is also important to do a lot of detail work, make many contacts, and generally have the energy to follow through on commitments. Generally, when success is reached, it is a team effort at the hands of a great facilitator.

An example of this kind of effort is the collaborative projects at Linn-Benton ESD. Judi Edwards has been the primary author of the *Principal's Handbook* and a technical manual on behaviors related to individualized educational plans. She has also played a key role in the Youth Service Teams. Edwards had the willingness to undego these efforts, which were mostly drawn out over a long period and very complex in their development. It is important to have someone like Edwards involved in these projects because it is their energy that helps *get the job done.*

Servant Leadership

Melaville introduces the concept of "servant leadership," which argues that nurturing leadership in others is as essential to effective leadership as actually leading. Of course, this is what encouraging ownership is all about.

Creating linkages among dozens of education and social service agencies requires not one leader but many, claims Melaville. An indicator of a partnership's effectiveness, she adds, is the creation of new champions who take additional action on behalf of the shared goals. "Offering expanding opportunities for participants to exercise leadership, and to periodically taste its rewards, should be an ongoing objective in any partnership effort," Melaville concludes.

How do you give everyone a taste of leadership? One way is by ensuring that all participants have a role to play in achieving common goals. Another is to clearly assign opportunities to plan and implement action to different individuals and agencies. At the same time, hold these individuals or agencies responsible for the completion of their activities.

Paid Staff and Ownership

Dunn believes there are advantages to having paid staff and advantages to having unpaid staff. In YSTs where at least some of the staff members are

paid, those who receive monetary payment may tend to feel that the YST is *their* responsibility. Dunn compares the two types of YSTs—those with paid staff and those with unpaid staff—in terms of ownership:

> Having no money is an asset in that the net effect of not having paid staff is that there is more of an agency buy-in to the concept and there is the potential for more heartfelt ownership. What happens, in my opinion, is that in those agencies where they have paid staff, the idea of the YST can be seen as the responsibility of the people who are paid to do it. But in YSTs where staff members are not paid, it tends to be seen as an *agency* commitment, not an individual one.

This does not mean you should not have paid staff. However, if some staff members are reimbursed for the work they do on the collaborative, pay special attention to ownership and responsibility issues.

School-Directed Collaboratives and Ownership

Some collaboratives are primarily instigated or directed by schools

Youth Service Teams

The Youth Service Team (YST) began in Marion County in 1975 when a group of counselors and nurses got together to compare cases and then wondered if there would be money for something like a YST. They received a grant and today have a team in Salem, plus four teams in outlying or rural areas.

Judi Edwards, social services consultant for Oregon's Linn-Benton ESD, defines a *Youth Service Team* as a formalized interagency body of people that gets together to develop a community action plan for at-risk school-age children. The group provides a problem-solving arena. Agencies often involved are Children's Services Division, Adult and Family Services, mental health, juvenile services, drug and alcohol programs, local and state law enforcement agencies, the school district, and perhaps other private counseling or youth agencies.

In Linn and Benton counties, the eight YSTs receive their referrals mainly from the schools. Usually it is the school counselor who presents the case. The teams in Linn-Benton meet every two weeks to consider new referrals and develop action plans. Most of the students referred have needs that go beyond the educational focus of the school or are referred when school staff know that the student and his or her family are already connected with agencies, but there is no communication among the agencies.

Some YSTs have case managers, but most are not striving for the kind of case management that Linn-Benton's YSTs are. Although Linn-Benton's YSTs do not currently have case managers, they have recently been awarded a U.S. Department of Education grant for designing a comprehensive service delivery system for students with serious emotional disturbance. This project will fund a feasibility study for case management in this area. Ideally, they would like to have one case manager affiliated with each YST and to have them create a "family plan" with each family. "I think the case manager is the advocate for the student and the family," says Edwards, speaking of the new role for case management in collaboratives today, "and that means doing home visits and helping the family overcome barriers." The case manager would also take the staffing results from the YST to the family and work with them to develop a family plan.

Families and students in Linn-Benton are starting to participate in the staffing process. "That's the goal," says Edwards. "How else can you make a plan? You can't have a bunch of professionals writing a plan and then saying, 'Here, parents, take it'." She wrote into their grant request that either the parents would come to YST staffings or the case managers would take the YST recommendations back to the families and develop goals with the family.

In Marion County the YSTs are focusing on prevention. Until recently, Marion County's YSTs have targeted on the middle school and high school levels. However, now

themselves. However, schools are not necessarily in the best position to lead interagency efforts. According to Melaville, a school-directed model can limit the extent of other agencies' involvement because the school is considered "in charge."

The New Beginnings partnership in San Diego makes a distinction between a partnership that is "school-based"' and one that is "school-governed." The school and participating agencies in the New Beginnings partnership have chosen a shared operating agreement as the best way to create maximum cooperation (*Joining Forces*, Winter 1991b).

If the decision is made to co-locate services in the schools, Kirst emphasizes that it should not be assumed that the schools are "in charge" of a group of subordinate agencies. The parties, he stresses, should be regarded as equals. He recommends that an overall coordinator should be selected.

The Need for Coordination

If there is no overall guidance, says Dunn, the effort ends up being disorganized. Barb McCorkle, social worker for the Eugene School District,

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they have a grant that will allow them to expand into the elementary schools.

Both Marion County and Linn and Benton Counties have boards of advisors or policy boards made up of managers or representatives from the different agencies and schools. In Benton County, the superintendent of the Corvallis School District initially called all the directors of agencies and said, "Let's meet and form an advisory board and then develop a Youth Service Team."

In Linn County it was the other way around. Teams were formed first (Mill City's began eight years ago; southern Linn County's began just this past year). Then last year the agencies and schools realized they needed coordination, so they formed an advisory board. Dunn doesn't think it makes any difference whether you start "top-down" (such as with an advisory board) or "grassroots," as Linn County did—as long as the process is inclusive.

Linn-Benton also seems to be unique in creating the position of "social services consultant." In this capacity, Edwards expects to spend 75 percent of her time on the Youth Service Teams and on educating agencies.

YSTs have definitely had an impact, says Dunn. Albany's YST "staffed" forty-five young people last year. (For more details about results of Linn-Benton's YSTs, see the conclusion.)

YSTs can be adapted to meet the needs of any community. In fact, Dunn thinks the only elements Linn-Benton borrowed from Marion County's YSTs were the basic concept and the name.

Family Assistance Community Team (FACT)

Eugene also borrowed the concept, if not the name. The Eugene School District has a new committee representing CSD, mental health, public health, the school district, and the police department that they call FACT (Family Assistance Community Team). Barb McCorkle, social worker for the school district, says that FACT is probably analogous to a Youth Service Team.

FACT's general goals are similar: to "staff" students who need assistance and social services that they cannot get through the school. The group meets as a team, and the school person working with the child or family usually presents the case. Then the team establishes a plan of action. Whoever presents the case is considered the case manager. FACT only "staffed" six or seven students last year—its first year. However, McCorkle says, "We are trying to start small, since we are doing this in addition to everything else we do."

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agrees. Without someone to oversee efforts, she says, "you're just running off in twenty directions at once with no thought in mind, no focus to what you're doing. And that's not helpful."

Eugene, Oregon is a case in point. Bob Stalick, who was assistant superintendent for instruction of the Eugene School District before moving to the superintendency in Albany, says the Eugene district has made conscious efforts to decentralize itself and to give each school a great deal of autonomy. Each school, he says, is "pretty much an entrepreneurship by itself. In many ways, each school is like a separate district. Thus, each school interacts with agencies as it sees the need, with seemingly no overall coordination between schools or throughout the district."

There are many interesting collaborative efforts going on in various schools that involve school support personnel in Eugene. However, many of the people interviewed did not know what others were doing and wished the district would improve its coordination. Also, no one person or place has been designated as a local clearinghouse for information about collaboration between schools and social service agencies.

Rich Cook, branch manager of Adult and Family Services in Eugene, thinks Eugene collaborates well. Cook is a member of Eugene's Youth Development Commission, which includes the heads of various agencies, educators, and other community members. He is also part of an informal "high-level policy group" called the Youth Services Coalition that gets together to talk about issues. Cook says there are "a couple of groups out there that are keeping their eyes open." But he admits there isn't a place that functions as the hub of collaborative efforts.

Some counties have boards of advisors or policy boards, usually headed by a coordinator, that oversee all the Youth Service Teams in their jurisdiction. Some of these coordinating groups are more effective than others. But even in Linn County, Oregon, which had Youth Service Teams going for about eight years before a board of advisors was formed, the school and agency staff eventually recognized the importance of coordination and overall leadership.

Do Heads of Agencies Need to Meet?

Most joint projects have some kind of vehicle for overall coordination, whether it is a board of advisors, board of directors, advisory committee, or some kind of roundtable where issues and policy are discussed.

However, Jerry Horn, regional manager of CSD, maintains that heads of agencies do not need to meet. In the Jackson County Outreach Project, only agency staff members who work out of Ashland High School meet

twice monthly to discuss concerns and cases. Horn says,

> Agency heads don't need to meet. They hear from their staff, and their staffs are empowered in that way. You don't want to formalize it. The more you formalize it, you build up one more bureaucracy, one more set of barriers, so you need to keep it at the lowest possible level. Keep the people who are doing the work in charge.

Although Dunn is of the opinion that no one approach works for everyone, he believes that heads of agencies as well as line staff can benefit from getting together. "Having the heads of agencies meeting on a quarterly basis and bringing the problems that the YST staff is having to the process," he says, "is a way to make sure that the agencies maintain an interest and an investment in the Youth Service Teams." If heads of agencies are not meeting, the line staff can get varying points of view about the importance of the collaborative venture. When the advisory board meets, "the line staff remember that the heads of agencies meet and are invested in the process," he adds.

Whether heads of agencies meet or whether representatives from different agencies and institutions get together, the consensus is that the collaborative process must occur not only at the service delivery level, but at the policy-making and administrative levels as well. "At these levels," says Levy (1989), "formalized processes and structure facilitate communication, serve as a visible agent for the resolution of problems, and provide greater assurance that cross-system impacts of new initiatives will be anticipated and addressed."

Conclusion: Measuring the Impact of Collaboration

Are collaborative ventures between schools and social service agencies having an impact? The "one-stop shopping" school-based services in New Jersey, Iowa, and Kentucky certainly have offered more comprehensive, accessible services to students and families. These joint efforts have also encouraged communities to redefine their ideas about the use of school buildings, the role of schools within their communities, and overall community responsibility for *all* children (*Joining Forces*, Winter 1991a).

Yale University's study of seventy-two collaboratives for young children and their families found that almost all collaboratives were successful in improving both the quality and quantity of services. Many ventures spurred reforms in service delivery; the majority improved families' access to services; and more than 80 percent reported more effective use of existing resources as a result of collaborative work. By helping educate providers, consumers, and the public about services, the report says, collaboratives have advanced children's advocacy (Cohen 1991a).

The San Diego New Beginnings project discovered many innovative sparks due to the opening of communication lines among agencies and between agencies and schools. For example, by matching data from the two San Diego schools with a list of welfare recipients, the district can now tell which students qualify for free and reduced-price lunches, saving both parents and schools time and paperwork. "We keep seeing better ways to work together," says Connie Roberts, deputy director of community relations for the Department of Social Services (Cohen 1991b).

Cory Dunn says that the Linn-Benton Youth Service Teams (YSTs) have had an impact on several levels.

One of the changes Dunn has seen is in how behavioral consultants are perceived. In the beginning, the consultants were seen primarily as direct

service providers. Now they are much more in a consultant/facilitator role, where they help facilitate interagency collaboration to aid schools in accessing existing services.

Another example, Dunn says, is that Linn County has just recently decided to change the way caseworkers are assigned. Instead of having case workers go to all the YSTs, the Children's Services Division (CSD) has found it more efficient to have the same case worker on the same YST. "So it seems to me," says Dunn, "that the YST is beginning to shape how the services are determined by social service agencies because agencies can now see a clearer picture of their responsibilities in serving schools."

Dunn says that because this is the first year they have had countywide coverage, the ESD is just beginning to look at developing data in terms of service delivery and the effect that the YSTs have had on individual referrals. He thinks there are two levels to YST impact in general; one has to do with increasing interagency communication, and the other with service delivery.

Dunn believes case managers have a major role to play in service delivery. "We're of the opinion that when we get case managers, then we're going to have a more measurable impact on service delivery for individual kids," Dunn states.

Linn-Benton's YSTs have already made a considerable difference in school-agency relations. Dunn relates a pertinent example: "One superintendent, when he first started with the YST, said he was into what he called 'CSD bashing'." But now this same superintendent, in his role as chair of the YST, wants to do everything he can to help CSD do their job. Dunn adds that he thinks this is one of the primary benefits of the YSTs: "The point is that there's a lot of misunderstanding and fear that goes on. But when agencies get together, they get more realistic and supportive of each other rather than competitive."

Most people who are involved in collaborative ventures are very enthusiastic about them. "It's fun to do, it's energizing, and it's really creative," Jerry Horn of CSD says.

"I think it has to happen," Mary Hoyt sums up. "People are coming to the realization that you have to tie everything together. The seeds are being planted and I think it's the direction we're all going to have to go at some point. I just feel very excited. I feel we're right on the edge of something."

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